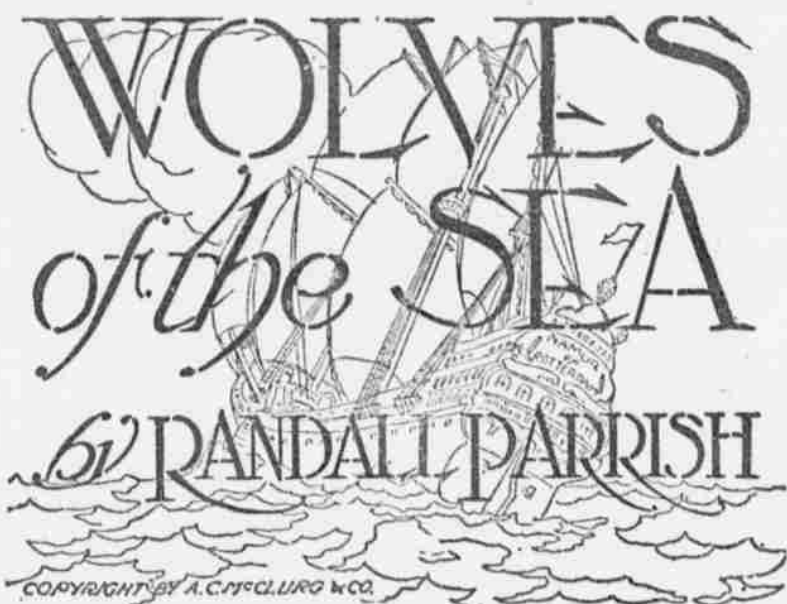


TANEY COUNTY REPUBLICAN

Vol. 24. No. 46.

FORSYTH, MISSOURI, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1919.

Four Page.



CHAPTER XXV.

The Open Boat.

I came back to a consciousness of pain, unable at once to realize where I was, or feel any true sense of personality. Then slowly I comprehended that I rested in a boat, tossed about by a fairly heavy sea; that it was night and there were stars visible in the sky overhead. I stared at these, vacant of thought, when a figure seemed to lean over me, and I caught the outline of a face, gazing eagerly down into my own. Instantly memory came back in a flash—this was not



This Was Not Death—but Life.

death, but life; I was in a boat with her. I could not move my hands, and my voice was but a hoarse whisper. "Miss Fairfax—Dorothy!" "Yes—yes," swiftly. "It is all right, but you must lie still. Watkins, Captain Carlyle is conscious. What shall I do?"

He must have been behind us at the steering oar, for his gruff, kindly voice sounded very close.

"Yer might lift him up, miss," he said soberly. "He'll breathe better. How's that, Captain?"

"Much easier," I managed to breathe. "I guess I am all right now. You fished me out?"

"Sam did. He got a boat hook in your collar. We cast off when yer went overboard, and cruised about in the fog hunting fer yer. Who was it yer was fightin' with, sir?"

"LeVere."

"That's what I told the lads. He's a gonner, I reckon?"

"I never saw him after we sank. Are all the men here?"

"All but those in the forward boat, sir. They got away first, an' we ain't had no sight or 'em since. Maybe we will when it gets daylight. Harwood's in charge. I give him a compass, an' told him ter steer west. Was that right?"

"All I could have told him. I haven't had an observation, and it is all guess-work. I know the American coast lies to that direction, but that is about all. I couldn't tell if it be a hundred, or a hundred and fifty miles away. I must have been in bad shape when you pulled me in?"

"We thought you was gone, sir. You was bleedin' some, too, but only from flesh wounds. The young lady she just wouldn't let yer die. She worked over yer for two or three hours, sir, afore I hed any hope."

Her eyes were downcast and her face turned away, but I reached out my hand and clasped her fingers. The mystery of the night and ocean was in her motionless posture. Only as her hand gently pressed mine did I gain courage, with a knowledge that she recognized and welcomed my presence.

"Watkins says I owe my life to you," I said, so low the words were scarcely audible above the dash of water alongside. "It will make that life more valuable than ever before."

She turned her head, and I felt her eyes searching the dim outline of my face questioningly.

"Of course I did everything I knew," she replied. "Why should I not? You are here, Captain Carlyle, for my sake; I owe you service."

"And must I be content merely with that thought?" I urged, far from pleased. "This would mean that your only interest in me arises from gratitude."

"And friendship," her voice as confidential as my own. "There is no reason why you should doubt that surely."

"It would be easier for me to understand, but for the memory of what I am—a bond slave."

"Your meaning is that true friendship has as a basis equality?"

"Does it not? Can real friendship exist otherwise?"

"No," she acknowledged gravely. "And the fact that such friendship does exist between us evidences my faith in you. I have never felt this social distinction, Captain Carlyle, have given it no thought. This may seem strange to you, yet is most natural. You bear an honorable name, and belong to a family of gentlemen, and you held a position of command, won by your own efforts. You bore the part of a man in a revolution; if guilty of any crime, it was a political one, in no way sullying your honor. I have every reason to believe you were falsely accused and convicted. Consequently that conviction does not exist between us; you are not my uncle's servant, but my friend—you understand me now?"

"And you would actually have me speak with you as of your own class—a free man, worthy to claim your friendship in life?"

"Yes," frankly, her face uplifted. "Why should it be otherwise? No man could have done more, or proved himself more staunch and true. We are in danger yet, but such peril is nothing compared with what I have escaped. I feel that your skill and courage will bring us safely to land. I am no longer afraid, for I have learned to trust you. You possess my entire confidence."

"But do you understand fully?" I questioned anxiously. "All I have done for you would have been done for any other woman under the same conditions of danger. Such service to another would have been a duty, and no more. But to be with you, aiding and protecting, has been a delight, a joy. I have served Dorothy Fairfax for her own sake—not as I would any other."

"Did you not suppose I knew?"

Her glance flashed into mine through the star-gleam, with a sudden message of revelation.

"You knew—that—that it was you personally I served?"

"Of course I knew. A woman is never unaware of such things. Now, if ever, I must tell you the truth. I know you care for me, and have cared since first we met. An interest no less faithful has led me to seek your acquaintance, and give you my aid. Surely it is not unmanly for me to confess this when we face the chance of death together?"

"But," I stammered, "I can scarcely believe you realize your words. I—I love you, Dorothy."

"And is it not also possible for me to love?"

"You—you mean, you love me?"

"I love you—are you sorry?"

"Sorry! I am mad with the joy of it; yet stricken dumb. Dorothy Fairfax, I have never even dared dream of such a message from your lips. Dear, dear girl, do you forget who I am? What my future?"

"I forget nothing," she said, proudly. "It is because I know what you are that my heart responds. Nor is your future so clouded. You are today a free man if we escape these perils, for whether Roger Fairfax be alive, or dead, he will never seek you again to hold in servitude. If alive he will join his efforts with mine to obtain a pardon because of these services, and we have influence in England. Yet, should such effort fail, you are a sailor, and the seas of the world are free. It is not necessary that your vessel fly the English flag."

"You give me hope—a wonderful hope."

"And courage," her hands firmly clasping mine. "Courage to fight on in faith. I would have that my gift to you, Geoffrey. We are in peril still, great peril, but you will face it beside me, knowing that whether we live or

COUNTY SCHOOL NOTES

Report of Attendance of Schools visited by County Superintendent:

School	Enrollment	No. Present	Teacher
Antioch	47	35	Loma Hilton
Brown	17	16	Elsie Hankins
Barger	41	26	Maude Dunn
Bethel	26	14	Lella Jackson
Brown Branch	55	44	Ida Kenner
Bradleyville	50	41	Ruth Nance
Bee Creek, North	29	28	Jessie Sutherland
Cedar Spring	48	40	Myrtle Compton
Dewey Grove	21	19	Josie Bull
Dickens	40	36	Bernard Bird
East View	26	22	Ethel Bird
Flag	31	24	Beulah Cox
Gobbler's Knob	33	24	Shirley Vandell
Hercules	38	36	Ray Holt
Hollister	57	54	Wm. Stafford, Ethel Dugger
Helphrey	27	21	William Boyd
Johnson	26	20	Bedford Scott
Kentucky Hollow	23	15	Poncie Savage
Kirbyville	37	33	Ben H. Parsons
Kessee Mills	37	28	W. A. Buck
Middleton	17	11	Beulah Jackson
Meadow	41	41	Dillie Vandeverter
Old Branson	28	27	R. N. Parsons
Oak Ridge	37	30	Ralph Whitley
Pleasant Shade	24	16	Mae Compton
Pleasant Hill	49	42	Margaret Vandell
Riverview	18	15	Mae Steacie
Ridgedale	49	44	Lillian Carmichael
St. James	26	22	Bevy McClary
Taneyville	35	34	Ora Hankins
Union Flat	49	36	Ethel Pierce
White Oak Grove	30	25	Ruth Powell
Wilson	18	18	Effie Cardwell
Walnut Shade	32	26	John Gladson

This report shows a big increase over last year's attendance. The compulsory attendance law is having a good effect. Practically all the absentees are over 14 and are at work.

IMPORTANT TO TEACHERS

The Southwest Teachers' Association will be held at Springfield, October 23, 24 and 25. Let's go.

die we are together. I am not afraid any more."

CHAPTER XXVI.

A Floating Coffin.

The laboring boat rested so low in the water it was only as we were thrown upward on the crest of a wave that I could gain any view about through the pallid light of the dawn. It was all a desolate, restless waste in the midst of which we tossed, while above hung masses of dark clouds obscuring the sky. We were but a hurtling speck between the gray above and the gray below.

The first thing needing my attention was the food and water. I crept forward cautiously and soon had Sam busily engaged in passing out the various articles for inspection. Only essentials had been chosen, yet the supply seemed ample for the distance I believed we would have to cover before attaining land. But the nature of that unknown coast was so doubtful I determined to deal out the provisions sparingly, saving every crumb possible. The men grumbled at the smallness of the ration, yet munched away contentedly enough, once convinced that we all shared alike.

"All right, lads," I said cheerfully. "Now we understand each other and can get at work. We'll divide into watches first of all—two men aft here and one at the bow. Watkins and I will take it watch and watch, but there is enough right now for all hands to turn to and make the craft shipshape. Two of you bail out that water till she's dry, and the others get out that extra sail forward and rig up a jib. She'll ride easier and make better progress with more canvas showing."

The men gradually knocked off work and lay down, and finally I yielded to Dorothy's pleadings and fell into a sound sleep. It seemed as though I scarcely lost consciousness, yet I must have slept for an hour or more, my head pillowed on her lap. When I awoke Schmitt was again at the steering paddle, and both he and Dorothy were staring across me out over the port quarter.

"What is it?" I asked eagerly, but before the words were entirely uttered a hoarse voice forward bawled out excitedly:

"There you see it; straight out agin that cloud edge. It's a full-rigged schooner."

"Ay," boomed another, "an' headin' straight cross our course astern."

I reached my feet, clinging to the mast to keep erect and, as the boat was again flung upward, gained clearly the glimpse I sought.

"Ay, you're right, lads!" I exclaimed. "It's a schooner, headed to clear us by a hundred fathoms. Port your helm, Schmitt—hard down, man. Now, Sam, off with that red shirt; tie it on the boat hook and let fly. They can't help seeing us if there is any watch on deck."

We swept about in a wide circle, headed straight across the bows of the



We Swept By in a Large Circle.

on-coming vessel. All eyes stared out watchfully, Sam's shirt flapping above us, and both Watkins and Schmitt straining their muscles to hold the plunging quarter-boat against the force of the wind. A man forward on his knees growled out a curse.

"What's the matter aboard there?" he yelled. "Did yer ever see a boat yaw like that, afore? Damn me, if I believe they got a hand at the wheel."

The same thought had leaped into my mind. The schooner was headed to pass us on the port quarter, yet yawing so crazily at times as to make me fearful of being run down. I could perceive no sign of life aboard, no signal that we had been seen. The sight angered me.

"Stand by, all hands," I cried desperately. "We'll board whether they want us or not. Slip across, Miss Fairfax, out of the way. Now, Watkins, run us in under those fore-chains; easy man, don't let her strike us. Lay hold quick, lads, and hang on for your lives. Give me that end of rope—ready now, all of you; I'll make the leap. Now then—hold hard!"

It was five feet, and up, my purchase the tossing boat, but I made it, one hand desperately gripping a shroud, until I gained balance and was flung inboard by a sharp plunge of the vessel. My head was at a level with the rail, yet I saw nothing, my whole effort being to make fast before the grip of the men should be torn loose. This done, I glanced back into the up-turned faces below.

"Ho! in slowly, lads; yes, let go, the rope will hold, and the boat ride safely through. Let a couple of men come up till we see what's wrong with the hooker—the rest of you trail on. Let Schmitt and Sam come with me."

I helped them clamber up and then lifted my body onto the rail, from which position I had a clear view of the forward deck. It was impressively dirty, yet otherwise shipshape enough. Nothing human greeted me, and conscious of a strange feeling of horror, I slipped over onto the deck. The next moment the negro and Dutchman joined me, the former staring about wildly, the whites of his eyes revealing his terror.

"My Gawd, sah," he ejaculated. "Ah done know dis boat—it's shore de Santa Marie. Ah's cooked in dat galley. She was a slaver, sah." He sniffed the air. "A kin smell dem niggers right now, sah. Ah suah reckon dars a bunch o' ded ones under dem hatches right dis minute."

Schmitt's hand fell heavily on my sleeve and I glanced into his stolid face.

"I just bet I know vat was der trouble."

"What, man?"

"Cholera," he whispered; "ve has boarded a death ship."

CHAPTER XXVII.

On Board the Slaver.

The terror of the two men as this thought dawned upon them in all its horror was apparent enough. Nothing, not even fire, was more to be dreaded than a visitation of this awful nature on shipboard. Charnel ship though this might be, it was safer by far than the cockleshell towing alongside.

"Let's find out the truth first, men," I said quietly. "Hold your tongues. There is no use giving up until we know what the danger is. Will you come with me?"

The terror in Sam's eyes caused me to laugh and my own courage came back with a rush.

"Afraid of dead men, are you? Then we'll face them together, my lads, and have it over with. Come on, now, both of you. Budge up; there is nothing to fear, if you do what I tell you—this isn't the first cholera ship I've been aboard."

It was no pleasant job confronting us, although we had less dead men to handle than I anticipated. Indeed, we found only five bodies on board. There were only two on deck, a giant, coal-black negro, and a gray-bearded white man, his face pitted with smallpox. Determined on what was to be done, I wasted no time with either body. The two sailors hung back, terrorized at the mere thought of touching these victims of plague. I stooped myself to the job and handled them alone, dragging the bodies across the deck and launching them over the low rail into the sea. I ordered Schmitt to cut the lashings and take charge of the wheel.

"See here, Sam, and you too, Schmitt, I am in love with that girl in the boat. Do you suppose I would ever have her come on this deck if I believed she might contract cholera? You do as I say and you are perfectly safe. Now, Schmitt, remain at the wheel, and you, Sam, come with me. There will be a dead nigger aboard unless you jump when I speak."

He trotted close at my heels as I flung open the door leading into the cabin. The air seemed fresh enough and I noted two of the ports wide open. A tall, smooth-shaven man, with an ugly scar down one cheek, lay outstretched on a divan at the foot of the after mast, his very posture proclaiming him dead. His face was the color of parchment, wrinkled with age.

The negro crept up behind me and stared at the upturned face.

"My Gawd, sah, he was de ol' captain. Paradilla, sah; damn his soul!"

In what was evidently the captain's room I discovered a pricked chart and log-book, with no entry in it for three days. Without waiting to examine these I stowed them away in my pocket. Between us we forced the stiffened form of the captain through the open after port and heard it splash into the sea astern. There were two dead seamen in the fore-castle, both swarthy fellows, with long Indian hair. I never saw a dirtier hole, the filth overpouring, and once satisfied that both men were beyond help, I was content to lower the scuttle and leave them there. God! it was a relief to return once more to the open deck and breathe in the fresh air. I hailed the boat towing below.

"Come aboard, Watkins," I called sharply. "Pass the lady up first, and turn the boat adrift."

I caught Dorothy's hands and aided her over the rail.

"Why was the vessel abandoned?" she asked. "What has happened? Do you know?"

Quietly I told her the truth and assured her that if we staid on deck and used our own bedding and provisions we were in no danger.

"How can I help you?"

"Tell the men just what I have told you," I said gravely. "They will be ashamed to show less courage than you."

We turned and faced them together as they formed a little group against the rail. Halla was first to speak.

"Vot was eet you say 'bout dis sheep? Bet had cholera—hey?"

Dorothy took a step forward, and confronted them, her cheeks flushed.

"You are sailors," she said, speaking swiftly, "and ought not to be afraid if a girl isn't. It is true this vessel was

ravaged by cholera, and the crew died;



I Aided Her Over the Rail.

but the bodies have been flung overboard—Captain Carlyle risked his life to do that before he asked us aboard. Now there is no danger so long as we remain on deck. I have no fear."

The Swede shook his head, grumbling something, but before the revolt could spread Watkins broke in.

"An' that's right, miss. I was on the Bombay Castle when she took cholera, an' we hed twenty-one days of it beatin' agin head winds off the Cape. We lost sixteen of the crew, but not a man among us who stayed on deck got sick. Anyhow, these blokes are goin' ter try their luck aboard yere, or else swim fer it."

He grinned cheerfully, letting slip the end of the painter, the released quarter-boat gliding gently away astern, the width of water constantly increasing.

"Now, bullies, jump fer it if yer want ter go. All right then, my hearties, let's hunt up something to work with and scrub this deck. That's the way to clean out cholera."

He led the way and they followed him, grumbling and cursing, but obedient. I added a word of encouragement, and in a few minutes the whole gang was busily engaged in cleaning up the mess forward, their first fears evidently forgotten in action. Watkins kept after them like a slave driver.

It was not difficult finding plenty for the lads to do, making the neglected schooner shipshape, and adjusting the spread of canvas aloft to the new course I decided upon. Sam started a fire in the galley and prepared a hot meal, singing as he worked, and before noon I had as cheerful a ship's crew forward as any man could possibly ask for. Dorothy and I glanced over the log, but gained little information. As the sun reached the meridian I ventured again into the cabin and returned with the necessary instruments to determine our position. With these and the pricked chart, I managed fairly well in determining our location, and choosing the most direct course toward the coast.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A New Plan of Escape.

Nothing occurred during the afternoon to disturb the routine work aboard or to cause me any uneasiness. Sunset brought clouds, and by the time it was really dark the entire sky was overcast, but the sea remained comparatively calm and the wind steady.

It was a pleasant night in spite of the darkness, the air soft and refreshing. The locker was filled with flags, representing almost every nation on earth. I dragged these out and spread them on the deck about the cabin, thus forming a very comfortable bed, and at last induced the girl to lie down, wrapping her in a blanket. Finally I found a seat beside her on a coil of rope, and we fell into conversation.

This was the first opportunity we had enjoyed to actually talk with each other alone.

"Dorothy," I said humbly, "you were frightened last night. I cannot hold you to what you said to me then."

"You mean you do not wish to? But I was not frightened."

"And you still repeat what you said then? You said, 'I love you.'"

"Yes, I can repeat that—I love you."

"Those are dear, dear words; but I ought not to listen to them, or believe. I am not free to ask a pledge of you, or to beg you to trust me in marriage."

"Is not that rather for me to decide?" she questioned archly. "I make a confession now. You remember the night I met you on deck, when you were a prisoner, and told you that you had become the property of Roger Fairfax? I loved you then, although I scarcely acknowledged the truth even to myself. We are all alike, we Fairfaxes; we choose for ourselves, and laugh at the world. That is my answer, Geoffrey Carlyle; I give you love for love."

(To Be Continued)